

# Context

One of the many ways that New Orleans is unique is that the city contains almost the entire continuum of contemporary land use environments. From a wildlife refuge and fishing camps, through suburbanstyle subdivisions and historic neighborhoods, to modern high rise buildings—New Orleans is all of these. In a broad sense, the city will continue to include these varied environments within its borders. In specific, however, there are many ways in which land use is likely to change over time. The purpose of the New Orleans Master Plan is to help the city manage change so that it can achieve the goals for quality of life, economic prosperity, sustainability, and opportunity for all: the goals that are described in the other chapters of the plan. The Land Use Plan sets forth the policy framework for the physical development of the city, providing a guide for city decision makers in directing the pattern, distribution, density and intensity of land uses that will, over time, best result in the preferences expressed in the Master Plan and provide sufficient land to meet demand for various land uses in the future.

This Master Plan promotes a smart growth future for New Orleans; pedestrian and bike friendly and well-served by transit; a high-density 24-hour downtown where people can live, work and play; a range of housing choices in walkable neighborhoods; mixed-use centers and corridors with neighborhood retail and services supported by a critical mass of compact and high density residential development and pedestrianand bike-friendly environments; well-landscaped and environmentally sustainable. It is committed to both the preservation of traditional neighborhoods and the creation of new housing types and density choices in mixed-use "neighborhood centers," coordinated with alternative modes of transportation—creating "transit ready" areas as well as bike-friendly developments.

The Future Land Use Map was created based on an evaluation of existing land uses; the district by district proposed land uses in the 1999 Land Use Plan adopted by the City Planning Commission; proposed land use changes in previous planning documents, such as the Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan [Lambert] and UNOP; analysis of underutilized land and redevelopment opportunities; and much discussion in the public meetings and with neighborhoods in the Master Plan process.

This Land Use Plan assumes that the existing footprint of the city will not change. Soon after Hurricane Katrina, the decision was made not to attempt broad reorganization of settlement patterns in New Orleans. Residents were encouraged to demonstrate the viability of their neighborhoods by coming home and rebuilding. Three years later, almost all parts of the city have regained more than 50% of their pre-Hurricane Katrina population and public investment is allocated for all neighborhoods. The safety and resilience issues associated with this reality are discussed in Chapter 12.

It is common to see citywide master plans or comprehensive plans for older cities with Future Land Use Maps providing only general indications of density or building type. This is because these cities have grown organically with a fine-grained mix of densities. The proposed land uses in the 1999 New Orleans Master Plan were mapped in this way. However, the 2008 master plan charter amendment requires that the Land Use Plan state densities corresponding to the land uses. The Land Use Plan relies upon a variety of proxy measures to estimate existing densities.

Density is generally expressed either as the number of dwelling units per acre (for residential land uses) or as Floor Area Ratio (FAR). FAR is the total building floor area (on all floors) divided by the area of the lot. Generally used for nonresidential land uses, it is also sometimes used for residential uses greater than two family structures. Although people often presume that single family housing is lower density than other residential configurations, in a particular situation small lot single family units could be built more densely than some multifamily residential buildings. "Single family" denotes a housing type rather than a density.

Land use patterns and decisions are influenced by population and economic growth (which create market demand), transportation access and opportunities, the availability of infrastructure, environmental constraints, and quality of life potential reflected in schools, parks and recreational opportunities, and cultural amenities. Although the Future Land Use Plan and the City's zoning and development regulations create a framework for land use, most development decisions are made by the private sector. Government can shape and influence these decisions by the siting of public facilities and infrastructure, by public investments, by incentives, and by disincentives. The Future Land Use Plan or the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance cannot, in themselves, cause development of a specific type to happen.

- Population and economic growth. New Orleans has sufficient land in redevelopment opportunities to accommodate population and economic growth over the next twenty years. The main issue is to ensure that redevelopment provides sufficient choice in the types and locations of development that people and businesses are seeking.
- Transportation access. Transportation choice and convenience—transit, roads, bicycle and multiuse
  routes, as well as freight and long-distance opportunities—influence where people want to live and
  where businesses want to locate. The location of public transportation routes, stops, and hubs will
  be a key element in shaping New Orleans' future development. Public transportation provides the
  opportunity to cluster higher densities, providing the critical mass for successful, walkable mixed-use
  environments. Planning for development that will take advantage of transit should occur long before the
  first train, trolley, or bus rapid transit vehicle leaves the station on a new route.
- Infrastructure. New Orleans already provides water, sewer and drainage infrastructure to all parts of the city west of Chef Menteur Pass and east of the Intracoastal Canal on the West Bank. Because the cost of repairing and maintaining that necessary infrastructure is very high, it is not prudent to promote new development that would require extension of additional public infrastructure.
- Environmental constraints. Much of the remaining land that has not been previously developed in New Orleans has environmental constraints, primarily wetlands. The entire city is subject to varying degrees of flood risk, as discussed in detail in Chapter 12 of this Plan. Given that reality, it is not prudent to promote significant new "greenfield" development. Rather, efforts must focus on improving safety in areas where development already exists.
- Quality of life. A number of issues make up quality of life: school quality, parks and recreational
  opportunities, culture, walkability, convenient and attractive retail areas, transportation choice, and so
  on. Although quality of life conditions are often considered only in terms of residential development,
  businesses of all kinds that provide good jobs for educated workers want to locate in places with many
  amenities, because that is where their workers want to live.

One of the most important purposes of the Future Land Use Map is to promote a geographical pattern of land uses that will enhance quality of life and economic prosperity for the city as a whole. The well-known real estate mantra, "location, location, location," is as important for the overall pattern of land use and development within a city as it is for the individual property owner. A desirable location is only partly an attribute of a particular piece of property. It results from the intersection of interrelated conditions which include nearby existing and future land uses, transportation investments, availability of public services and facilities, the character of the "public realm"—whether public spaces like streets, sidewalks, plazas,

parks, and so on are attractive and welcoming or barren and ugly—and the likelihood for these conditions to persist or change. Many of the conditions that create a desirable location are dependent on public action and public investment.

How land uses are located geographically and their relationship to one another helps create more higher value, desirable locations with greater overall choice and amenities in the city as a whole, improving quality of life and economic prosperity for everyone. Land uses arranged so that they have beneficial impacts on one another help produce communities where the whole results in more than the sum of the parts. A system of well-organized land uses creates the possibility of more choice in transportation, supports consumer-oriented businesses, provides neighborhoods attractive to the work force, and mitigates adverse impacts by improving the compatibility of diverse land uses.

#### What kinds of land uses are likely to stay the same?

Any land use map for the future is based on existing land uses. Some land uses are less susceptible to change once they have been established. For example, single family and lower-density residential neighborhoods tend to stay in place over long periods, with limited change or encroachment from other uses. Similarly, functioning heavy industry and utility facilities do not tend to move because it is difficult to find new locations. In contrast, retail and light industrial land uses are more likely to change and to change in more rapid cycles.

Because New Orleans is a historic city with established residential neighborhoods, the majority of the residential areas on the Future Land Use Map will continue to reflect existing residential types and densities, particularly neighborhoods that contain predominantly single family to four-family buildings. Neighborhoods lightly touched by flooding during Hurricane Katrina retain their building character, and infill residential development will typically continue to conform to existing densities and general type. The older, pre-World War II neighborhoods are more complex because they often have a variety of densities in close proximity. The post-World War II neighborhoods were created with more uniformity in building type and character within subdivisions.

As discussed in earlier chapters of this plan, there are two types of neighborhoods where vacant homes or parcels exist. The Revitalization Neighborhoods, such as Central City, were experiencing serious disinvestment before Hurricane Katrina. Neighborhoods like this retain enough urban form to keep an overall scale and character in many areas. Recovery Neighborhoods were stable before the storm but experienced significant flooding and damage. In those areas, with the exception of the Lower Ninth Ward, where demolition has been extensive and resettlement remains limited, the housing unit density has tended to persist on a street by street basis (though some of the housing units are vacant), though building scale can change when rebuilding involves elevation or expansion.

Areas with nonresidential land uses that citizens want to retain and that are expected to persist are the successful mixed-use commercial districts in older neighborhoods; shopping areas that serve neighborhood needs; cultural and entertainment areas; port industrial land that is currently in use or expected to be used in the future; the New Orleans Industrial Park and similar places.

# What kinds of land uses are likely to change?

Underutilized commercial and industrial properties and public properties no longer needed are the prime candidates for transition to new uses. Vacant industrial land, dead or dying shopping centers, decommissioned schools and churches, downtown parking lots, and so on, are the types of uses that are most likely to be subject to change and are ready for new land use designation. In Volume 2, Chapter 14, many of these have been identified as "opportunity sites," where new land uses and development could

contribute to the success of adjacent neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Sometimes these sites are surrounded by neighborhoods, for example the Lindy Boggs site in Mid-City, offering the potential to create new mixed use centers with somewhat higher densities. A critical dimension to successful new development on opportunity sites is making sure that there are development and design standards in place that create attractive environments within the new development, connect it with the surrounding area so that it becomes part of the existing urban fabric, and ensure that the edges of the new development provide appropriate transitions to traditional neighborhoods.

# **B** Density in New Orleans

Compared to many American cities, New Orleans is already a relatively high-density city, even in the postwar neighborhoods. This is a good thing, because people who want to live in cities today are looking for density. They may not call it that and instead say they like to live in a place that is walkable, a place where you can get to know your neighbors just by walking down your street, where there is a mixture of shops and restaurants nearby, and where there are a lot of things to do—cultural, recreational, networking. To have all those things in a place, you need to have critical mass, and critical mass means density.

The Tulane University geographer, Richard Campanella, has argued that the approximately 2,000 New Orleans existing vacant or underutilized lots above sea level could accommodate tens of thousands of people. His discussion is based on looking at population densities during census years and he shows how population density declined from the peak population in 1960 to 2000. Densities in 1960 did not require so many households because more people were living in large families. Today, household sizes are dropping and cities like New Orleans have a third or more of the population living alone. As a result, cities need more housing units than before to accommodate the same or smaller populations. This is especially the case for young "knowledge" workers. Nonetheless, Campanella's point about using vacant areas on higher ground for housing is important.

While New Orleans rebuilds its traditional neighborhoods through infill, there are also opportunities to create centers of critical mass that can support enhanced public transportation; bring in new businesses, stores, and services; and diversify the city's housing stock to appeal to a new generation of city dwellers, as discussed in the housing section of Chapter 5. The Master Plan team identified a number of sites with potential for redevelopment, ranging from large sites suitable for mixed-use development to smaller sites to serve neighborhoods, "college town" areas where nearby universities can provide a market, and long corridors where "pulses" of clustered business uses could create some critical mass. Many are in or near the 17 Target Areas, existing transit, or future transit. On the Future Land Use Map, these areas are typically designated as Mixed-Use High Density or Mixed-Use Medium Density. A mixture of uses is not required, but should be promoted in these areas.

# The 1999 Land Use Plan from the Perspective of 2009

Before Hurricane Katrina, despite improvements resulting from the favorable economic climate of the 1990s, the city still faced a significant blight and vacancy problem in a number of older neighborhoods. Like all older cities, it was also in the early stages of transforming land and buildings no longer being used for industrial and warehouse purposes into new, desired uses, a process typified by the emergence of the Warehouse District as a new residential option in New Orleans. Redevelopment of the city's public housing projects was beginning with the redevelopment of St. Thomas in the Lower Garden District. A few gated, golf-course communities were built at the city edges—eastern New Orleans East and English Turn.

In the aftermath of the storm, New Orleans has been experiencing the same set of land use problems and opportunities—but at an intensified scale. The catastrophe created a much enlarged inventory of blighted buildings and vacant lots, though owners of some of these properties still fully intend to rehabilitate or rebuild them. Nonetheless, the large amount of vacant and underutilized property resulting from the combination of pre-Hurricane Katrina disinvestment and post-Hurricane Katrina delays in resettlement must be the focus of activity in order to reweave the urban fabric of New Orleans. As in most older cities in the United States, land use changes in New Orleans result from redevelopment of existing already developed land, and this will continue to be the case in the future. Development opportunities on unbuilt land are limited and typically constrained by wetlands or other conditions.

The 1999 Land Use Plan adopted by the City Planning Commission focused on adjusting land uses to enhance neighborhood quality of life. While some of the emphasis was on eliminating what were seen as incompatible land uses—and therefore strengthening the separation of land uses—there was a counterbalancing effort to recognize existing successful mixed-use environments and create new mixed use areas. There were two obvious tensions expressed in the 1999 Land Use Plan. One was the simultaneous desire to protect neighborhoods and reduce nonconforming uses by separating land uses contrasted with the desire for vibrant mixed-use environments. The other tension emerges in the implicit idea that designation of land for commercial and industrial uses will cause investment to arrive.

# 1. Preservation and revitalization of neighborhoods

1999 goals:

- Ensure the continued stability of strong neighborhoods.
- Focus on eliminating blight in distressed neighborhoods.
- Promotion of partnerships with community-based nonprofits.
- Support for redevelopment of public housing projects to reduce the concentration of poor households and create mixed-income neighborhoods.

#### 2009 perspective:

Neighborhood preservation and revitalization, now intensified by the expanded vacancy and blight caused by Hurricane Katrina and incremental resettlement, is at the center of New Orleanians' land use concerns—and indeed, permeates most of the chapters in this master plan. Residents of higher ground neighborhoods that bounced back quickly from the storm are vigilant about preserving neighborhood stability and the potential for inappropriate encroachments by commercial or other uses. The city neighborhoods that were already distressed before Hurricane Katrina continue to focus on revitalization efforts to rehabilitate housing, attract businesses, and enhance quality of life. In neighborhoods that suffered major flooding and are still in the process of recovery, returned residents are focused on restoring neighborhood-serving civic and retail services, as well as eliminating blight and promoting further resettlement. Redevelopment projects for four public housing developments became more controversial after the storm because of the loss of affordable housing, but the city decided to proceed with these projects, which will soon produce new, mixed-income neighborhoods.

# 2. Concentration of commercial activities

#### 1999 goals:

- Focus both neighborhood and regional commercial activity around major roadways and street intersections.
- · Reduce spot zoning.
- Direct future commercial growth to areas most able to provide adequate parking and traffic support.
- Encourage large-scale development in appropriate areas of the city to stimulate economic growth through job development, retail spending and tax generation.

#### 2009 perspective:

The 1999 Plan designated large areas for regional, auto-oriented commercial activities, especially in New Orleans East. From the perspective of 2009, the resulting future land use map has too many areas assigned to retail, especially regional retail. In the post-Hurricane Katrina environment there is less emphasis on this kind of approach and a greater turn to creating mixed-use environments that fit into neighborhoods and are internally organized to be pedestrian-friendly. At the same time, added tax base through development continues to be needed. Residents continue to be concerned about the potential for spot zoning under current procedures for land use change.

# 3. Implementation of Mixed Use Categories

#### 1999 goals:

- Neighborhood-scale mixed use: neighborhood-serving retail and services at a residential scale, for example, the corner grocery or barber shop interspersed with residences.
- Urban-scale mixed use: larger scale mixes of office, retail, higher density housing, light manufacturing.

## 2009 perspective:

The inclusion of mixed-use land use categories reflects the reality of some of New Orleans' most iconic and vibrant neighborhoods. Larger-scale mixed-use development has proven to be very successful throughout the country, while malls and other commercial uses in separate land use districts have been declining in value and profitability. Preservation of successful residential-scale mixed-use areas remains very important to residents. In new development, whatever the scale, many public meeting participants expressed that they want to see the fine-grained intermixture of uses and environments that are characteristic of the historic city.

# 4. Reduction of Non-Conforming Uses

#### 1999 goals:

• Redesignation to residential of industrial and commercial uses in areas now surrounded by residences, based on information from citizen workshops about land use conflicts.

#### 2009 perspective:

Non-conforming uses, typically non-residential uses surrounded by residences, were redesignated in the 1999 Plan where residents identified problems. However, this is a notoriously site-specific problem, often having less to do with a specific use than the way the non-conforming businesses are operated or managed in relation to the neighborhood. Where land is underutilized or vacant, redesignation of uses may make sense. Where there are active, tax-paying uses, it is important to balance their contribution to the city in terms of jobs and property taxes and pursue innovative approaches to make it possible for residences and these businesses to coexist. New zoning requirements, conditional uses, management agreements about operations, and similar approaches are likely to be more effective in some cases than land use category changes.

# 5. Concentration of Industrial Land Uses

#### 1999 goals:

- Concentration of industrial land uses, especially heavy industry, near the Industrial Canal, the Desire/Agriculture Street Landfill area and the Intracoastal Waterway "to stimulate further economic development and industrial investment."
- Reduction of light industrial land in the city core, with only low-impact industrial uses to be allowed.
- Downgrading of much of the land formerly used for heavy industry in Central City and along former rail corridors to light industry and regional commercial, reflecting appropriate uses for areas near dense residential development.
- Change of declining industrial areas along the Mississippi River to future use as green space and mixed use development.

#### 2009 perspective:

The 1999 Land Use Plan designated 8,156 acres for heavy industry and 2,821 acres for light industry, a total of 10,977 acres, most of which is vacant today. Moreover, most of that land is in New Orleans East along the Intracoastal Waterway and with access to rail, but it also includes an operating landfill, several closed landfills and borrow pits, and severely degraded wetlands at the edges. Most land designated for industrial uses remains vacant. A focus on upgrading infrastructure and amenities at the industrial park and similar areas where plenty of industrial land remains could help attract more businesses to specific parts of this corridor. However, land not needed for industrial use in New Orleans East should be kept in its natural state to provide for additional water retention and storm-surge protection.

# 6. Increase of Green Space and Recreational Areas

#### 1999 goals:

- Green space and recreational areas to provide greater public access to the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain waterfront.
- Designation of green space in neighborhoods lacking parks and as buffers to reduce land use conflicts, partly through relocation of industrial uses.

#### 2009 perspective:

Access to waterfront and neighborhood greenspace continues to be important to residents. The creation of new green space along the Mississippi is under way. (See Volume 2, Chapter 7 for a discussion on green space priorities.)

# 7. A mechanism to organize neighborhood participation in future land use decisions.

# 1999 goal:

The 1999 Land Use Plan proposed creating a mechanism to organize community participation in the city's development process.

#### 2009 perspective:

As noted elsewhere in this plan, such a mechanism is mandated by the passage of the 2008 master plan charter amendment. (See Chapter 15.)

# **D** Land Use Issues Today

Since the storm, a number of other land use issues have emerged. Moreover, the analysis and recommendations in the other chapters of this plan point towards some new directions in several land use issues.

# 1. Scale and pattern of residential vacancy and blight

More than 5,000 residential acres (on over 35,000 lots) of vacant buildings or land are still unoccupied since Hurricane Katrina. This count is based on utility account data and is in addition to pre-Hurricane Katrina vacancies. Overall, the resettlement process, still under way, is the result of thousands of decisions by individual property owners. Some have already returned and rebuilt, some are still working on their properties, some made the decision to sell to Road Home and the properties are being handled through the various NORA programs—but the result has been a persistent "jack o' lantern" pattern of vacant homes and lots next to reoccupied homes. This is particularly the case in the neighborhoods that suffered the greatest flooding. Some homeowners will acquire additional lots or parts of lots through the Lot Next Door program, but that will not change the overall density potential represented by the predominant lot size. Because the long term objective is to promote a regional smart growth development pattern that returns more households to New Orleans through infill in existing neighborhoods, retaining the compact, small-lot pattern of city neighborhoods is important, even if some of those lots are vacant now.

# 2. School and church decommissioning

Within the next decade, New Orleans will see the decommissioning of up to 53 public schools, occupying some 275 acres of land, and at least 16 Catholic churches. These closings are only partially the result of Hurricane Katrina. Cities all over the country have seen schools and Catholic churches close because of changing demographics. Over the last 30 years urban communities have changed and now have fewer, smaller households with fewer school-age children. The 2008 New Orleans School Facilities Master Plan found that the school district had not closed schools over time as the city's public school enrollment declined for decades. Decisions to close neighborhood schools are always painful for parents and neighborhoods and how many and exactly which schools will be closed (and, in some cases, demolished) in the final instance is not known. It is certain, however, that a number of neighborhoods will have empty schools or former school sites in locations surrounded by residences.

In addition, the Catholic Archdiocese announced in 2008 that the combination of millions of dollars in uninsured losses, fewer parishioners, and projected loss of priests through retirement or death required the closing of churches and merging of congregations. Additional Church property, such as parochial schools, will also end up decommissioned, joining existing vacant church owned land.

What this means for land use in the city is that almost every planning district will include large, institutional buildings, often surrounded by residences, that will be available for redevelopment. School buildings have been redeveloped or repurposed in New Orleans before, and both schools and churches have been very successful adaptive reuse projects throughout the country. The recent interim use of the Colton School as artists' studios and an arts education center is a case in point. Many of these school buildings were already in disrepair before Hurricane Katrina. However, the fact that many were built before 1960 is a plus, since the design of earlier school buildings tends to be more suitable for adaptive reuse. Redevelopment of these sites should be guided by a community-based planning process, ideally not in isolation but as part of district and neighborhood plans. These projects may propose multifamily, residential, mixed residential/commercial, or another type of institutional use. These potential uses should not be seen as inconsistent with the future land use plan.

#### 3. Medical District

Land use issues in the medical district are still in the planning phases. (A discussion of the Medical District is included in Volume 2, Chapter 9.) The city should have a leading role in planning the physical character of this district, with the focus on creating a mixed-use, walkable urban environment.

# 4. New Orleans Naval Support Activity Sites

The West Bank NSA Site will become the Federal City mixed use area, including military and federal agency offices, federal contractors, housing, and supportive commercial. Assisted by state and local funding, Federal City broke ground in early 2009. On the East Bank, the NSA site planning process is nearing completion in early 2009 with several mixed use options on the table. These areas are redesignated as mixed-used in the Future Land Use Plan.

## 5. Downtown

Downtown as a whole is a mixed-use district, but different subdistricts exhibit varying scale and activities. Land use designations need to recognize these variations while providing appropriate flexibility to allow for intensified residential and commercial uses to create a 24-hour downtown full of activity and jobs. (Volume 3, Chapter 9 includes a more detailed discussion of downtown.)

# 6. Lower Algiers

Lower Algiers currently has a semi-rural character, with the exception of the English Turn golf course subdivision. With limited transportation and other infrastructure, it is not suitable for higher-density development, but conservation subdivisions that cluster housing while protecting open space could help preserve character there.

#### 7. New Orleans East

Because the existing zoning allows multifamily development in commercial zones, before Hurricane Katrina many areas in New Orleans East attracted as-of-right multifamily developed that was often poorly designed and poorly managed. New approaches to multifamily development in New Orleans East are under development. The area is also underserved by retail, despite the return of a significant population and the presence of the interstate. Most of New Orleans East is made up of postwar single-family neighborhoods with a smaller number of two-family neighborhoods.

# 8. Vacant and underutilized non-residential land (Opportunity Sites)

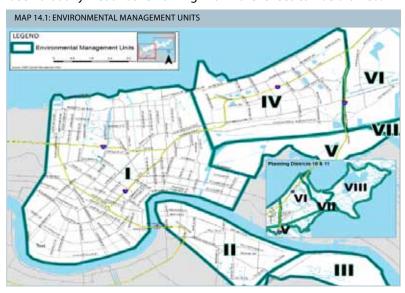
As noted earlier, redevelopment and adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized non-residential property was already under way before Hurricane Katrina, most notably in the creation of a residential and mixed-use environment in the Warehouse District. Hurricane Katrina added to the inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial sites in the city. These sites, particularly empty commercial strips and shopping centers, offer the opportunity to create neighborhood centers that combine retail, services, and offices with medium-scale residences that can fill the transition from commercial uses to surrounding neighborhoods. Although some of these areas would continue to be reached by car, they would provide walkable environments on site and connections to the surrounding area. In the Future Land Use Map, these areas have been designated for mixed use at various densities (Low, Medium and High), depending on location within neighborhoods, access to transit (or future transit) and/or highways, and the existing character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods. (Possible scenarios for several of these "Opportunity Sites" are shown in Volume 3, Chapter 14.)

# 9. Environmentally-sensitive land

Hurricane Katrina reminded everyone in New Orleans that the city needs to manage and learn to live with water. The most significant environmentally-sensitive land in New Orleans is wetland or land adjacent to wetlands. Many New Orleans wetlands are already significantly degraded and the kinds of land uses that have tended to locate near them—such as auto junkyards—are very damaging because of nonpoint pollution and seepage of petroleum products. Although the coastal wetlands are already under some regulation, the assumption has often been that any wetlands remaining within the levees can be drained.

Given the need for as much water storage area as possible, these wetlands should be off-limits for development from now on.

New Orleans began planning for its coastal wetlands as early as 1975, before the state passed Act 361, the Louisiana State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act. The Orleans Coastal Management Plan, revised in 1985, continues to guide management of land use activities outside the levees to conform with state coastal management guidelines. Chapter 170, Article III of the City Code "provides procedures for local"



government determination of what activities require a coastal use permit, whether the activity is a use of state or local concern," and the permitting process. After the adoption of this city Master Plan, the Coastal Management Plan should be updated.

The city is divided into Coastal Zone Management Units, of which the first four lie within the levees. The management program attempts to balance wetlands preservation for their ecological and recreational value with industrial development and recreational access.

#### MANAGEMENT UNIT V: VIAVANT

The plan and code recognizes that this area has been significantly modified, with the management goal "to provide, where appropriate, land...as an industrial development reserve to meet long-range industrial needs." The plan provides that infrastructure should not be extended "until other available industrial land is absorbed, except in unusual circumstances," and envisions the area as a potential port expansion area "without causing undue deterioration to the coastal zone." With the closing of MRGO, the state's commitment to coastal restoration in southeast Louisiana, and the continued lack of interest in most of this area for attractive industrial growth, review of the suitability of this area for industrial growth is prudent. Bayou Bienvenue, which is at the southern border of this area, is a degraded wetland that would likely not benefit from adjacent industrial development. The language of the plan by implication recognizes the unsuitability of development in most of this area.

#### MANAGEMENT UNIT VII: NEW ORLEANS EAST/SPECIAL

The management goal for this area is "to preserve viable wetlands in recognition of their ecological and recreational value;" allow limited marine-oriented industrial development "in appropriate areas;" and to increase water-oriented recreational opportunities. The majority of this area lies within Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Area, with Point-aux-Herbes and Venetian Isles Marsh identified as the other areas of interest.

#### MANAGEMENT UNIT VIII: CHEF MENTEUR/RIGOLETS

This area contains the traditional fishing camps and, increasingly, year-round housing along Chef Menteur Highway in the Lake St. Catherine neighborhood. The management plan goals are: conservation of renewable natural resources; allow "orderly recreational and residential development in areas of higher elevations near existing access roads and development;" reduce pollution; minimize the cumulative impacts of camp development and construction; and control shoreline erosion.

While existing development must be recognized, expansion of development beyond what already existed at the time of Hurricane Katrina should not be permitted. The primary values in these areas should be promotion of wetlands ecological health and water-dependent recreation and fishing.

# 10.City-Owned Land Outside the City Limits

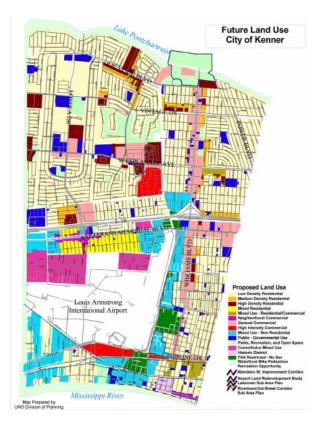
The City of New Orleans owns land outside the city limits:

- · Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, in the City of Kenner and St. Charles **Parish**
- The Huey P. Long Bridge in Jefferson Parish, owned by the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad
- The Wisner Donation trust lands in Lafourche, St. John the Baptist, and Jefferson Parishes
- Delgado-Albania Plantation located near the City of Jeanerette
- Sewerage and Water Board holdings

#### LOUIS ARMSTRONG NEW ORLEANS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport encompasses 1,500 acres and is located almost entirely in the City of Kenner, with a small portion of one runway in St. Charles Parish. Because the airport is located outside the City of New Orleans city limits, it cannot expand through the exercise of eminent domain and would need City of Kenner and/or St. Charles Parish approval to expand. The Southeast Regional Airport Authority authorized in 2008 to study the possibility of the state taking over the airport in return for payments to New Orleans or privatization raised concerns in Kenner and St. Charles, which oppose the airport's expansion.

Land in close proximity to the airport, known as "Airport Buyout Land" in Kenner is subject to use restrictions by the Federal Aviation Administration, which generally does not allow residential uses. Lands at the end of runways, called "Runway Protection Zones," may not be developed. The airport also owns approximately 72 acres east of the access road and south of Airline Drive. Kenner's



2008 land use plan, "Pattern for Progress," identifies much of the Airport Buyout Land as an economic development opportunity for the city, which otherwise has little undeveloped land. These lands are designated for nonresidential mixed use in the plan's Future Land Use Map and the plan recommends that the City of Kenner and the Airport initiate a joint planning process for these properties.<sup>1</sup>

#### NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT RAILROAD

The Public Belt Railroad owns the 4.35-mile double-track and roadway Huey P. Long Bridge, located in Jefferson Parish. A major expansion project of the roadway portion of the bridge is under way by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and is expected to be completed in 2013.

#### THE EDWARD WISNER DONATION

The Edward Wisner Donation is a nonprofit land trust with holdings of 35,000 acres of wetlands and water bottoms in Lafourche, St. John the Baptist and Jefferson parishes. Title to the holdings was donated to the City in 1914 and the donation is held in trust by the City, with the mayor as trustee. The donation is managed for the financial interest of the beneficiaries, with most of the income from oil and gas leases, and for the long-term protection and sustainability of the wetlands and other holdings. The management goal of the trust is to obtain the oil and gas without destroying the environment. While the old leases were very destructive, strict environmental safeguards are now included in all contracts and observers in the field ensure compliance.

The city receives 34.8% of the revenue, Charity Hospital and the State of Louisiana receive 12%, and the remainder goes to Tulane University, the Salvation Army, and heirs of Edward Wisner. The city's revenue goes into the Wisner Fund, which gives out grants for health, beautification, education and capital projects at the mayor's discretion after recommendations by the Wisner Donation Advisory Committee. In 2008, approximately \$800,000 was available for grants, but the amount varies from year to year.

The holdings in the three parishes include:

- Jefferson Parish— approximately 1,800 acres accessible only by boat
  - > An inholding in James Lafitte Park
  - > Pipelines and an oil well
  - > Fishing camps leased to individuals
- St. John the Baptist Parish—approximately 2,800 acres
  - > Used for alligator trapping and similar activities
  - > Negotiations are under way to lease it to Louisiana Outdoors, a private hunting organization, which would provide management and limit the Wisner Donation's liability
- Port Fourchon—approximately 32,000 acres, mainly salt marsh
  - > 21,000 acres in a 54-year lease at no cost to the state as the Wisner Wildlife Management Area
  - > 9 miles of beach between Bay Champagne near the Greater Lafourche Port Commission's public boat launch and the Gulf of Mexico
  - > Fishing camps
  - > Marsh restoration projects

About 22% of all US oil production enters Louisiana from the Offshore Oil Port through pipelines that travel through Wisner property.

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Pattern for Progress: City of Kenner Land Use Plan, July 1, 2008, <u>www.kenner.la.us</u>

#### DELGADO-ALBANIA PLANTATION COMMISSION

Like Edward Wisner, Isaac Delgado established a trust in the early twentieth century for his sugar plantation, Albania Plantation, near Jeanerette. The trust funds were directed to establish a trade school for boys, of which Delgado Community College is the successor institution and beneficiary of the trust. The plantation house was sold and the City now owns about 2,000 acres, of which 1,300 are planted in sugar cane on rich land on Bayou Teche. Two tenant farmers work the land and one-sixth of the crop goes to the trust. The proceeds are invested by the City's Director of Finance. The trust in 2009 has approximately \$1.3 million. The funds can only go to Delgado Community College for college needs. Appointed by the Mayor, the Commission is made up of 5 citizen members, who must be New Orleans residents with a background in agriculture, and the Director of Finance.

#### SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD

The drainage system operated by the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board also drains approximately 2250 acres of Jefferson Parish.